and hunger eradication were discussed. Bracketed text on achieving improvements in market access, phasing out of export subsidies and reduction of trade distorting practices in agriculture were considered together with other trade related issues. However, due to their domestic compulsions, developed countries did not agree to lift farm subsidies and thus it did not find place in the agreed texts of Political Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Law for use of Forest Materials

2398. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests had received proposal during June, 2001 from Orissa Ex-MLAs Council, to make Law for not using the forest materials in buildings, except thatched houses and instead of using iron, aluminium, plastics as alternatives; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken so far, by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry is already aware of the issue of desirability of substitution of wood by other materials for various purposes including construction of buildings and has issued guidelines/instructions to the States/Central Government Organisations for necessary action.

Pine Forests in Central Himalayan region

†2399. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that underground water level of Central Himalayan region is continuously declining, due to expansion of Pine forest there;

(b) whether it is also a fact that during the recent years, the area covered by wide leaf trees has shrunk while the pine forest cover has expanded; and

(c) if so, the steps his Ministry is going to take to promote afforestation

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.